

**REMARKS**

Review and reconsideration on the merits are requested.

The Examiner objected to claims 16 and 22 as not further limiting the subject matter of claim 14 from which they depend.

In response, claim 16 has been canceled. Claim 22 has been amended to means-plus-function form, to introduce a structure (i.e., means) for maintaining the inner surface of the resin-holding section at a temperature higher than the surface temperature of the heating medium circulating means. For example, the subject means may be heating medium circulation means 25. Claim 22 as amended is narrower than claim 14 from which it depends because claim 22 further requires the subject means to perform the claimed function.<sup>1</sup>

Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 14, 17, 19 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Specifically, the Examiner considered (i) “the member” as recited in claim 14, line 13 as lacking antecedent basis in the claim. Further, the Examiner inquired as to whether the “heating means” can be the same element as the “heating medium flow pipe.” With respect to claim 17, lines 3 and 4, the Examiner considered that (ii) “the lower opening” and “the upper opening” lack positive antecedent basis because these elements were not previously recited in the claims. The Examiner further considered that (iii) the phrase “heating medium flow pipe forming the lowermost layer guide the resin” in claim 19, lines 2-3 to be confusing. Finally, with respect to

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<sup>1</sup> A means-plus-function clause defines corresponding structure described in the specification and drawings for performing the claimed function and equivalents thereof.

claim 23, the Examiner considered that (iv) the meaning of the term “virtually” cannot be ascertained.

Each of the above (i) to (iv) is addressed in turn, as follows.

(i) “The member” refers to the resin-holding section. Further, as described at page 17, lines 17-20 of the specification, the heating medium circulation means 25 and the heating medium flow pipe 20 may be linked together, whereby a heating medium is continuously circulated throughout the heating medium circulation means 25 and the heating medium flow pipe 20.

(ii) The “lower opening” and “upper opening” of claim 17 refer to the openings formed when the flow-regulating plates 22 and 23 are caused to be slanted as shown in Fig. 5.

(iii) As described bridging pages 16-17 of the specification, under the heating medium flow pipe 20A forming the lowermost layer, another flow-regulating member 21A is provided (see Fig. 1). This regulating plate guides resin which has flowed down from the heating medium flow pipe to the wall of the apparatus main unit. This is a sixth mode of the invention as described at page 9, lines 1-6 of the specification.

(iv) Applicants agree with the Examiner’s proposed amendment.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims as amended fully comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112, and withdrawal of the foregoing rejection is respectfully requested.

Withdrawal of all rejections and allowance of claims 14, 15 and 17-26 is earnestly solicited.

In the event that the Examiner believes that it may be helpful to advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number indicated below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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